

WHAT IS CHRISTIANITY?

1 John 1: 1-4

Gnosticism permeated churches and was being taught by some of the leaders.
Result: confusion & division.

Hanke Thompson Church Companion Bible: *The Gnostic heresy could not be reconciled with Christianity. The Gnostic philosophy included dualism (matter is evil, spirit is good) and Docetism (the view that the union of Christ with the human Jesus was only apparent). The Gnostic's could accept the deity of Jesus but not the humanity. To some Gnostics, Christ's office was to teach the knowledge or secrets of their system, pertaining to cosmic order. To them the heavenly Christ did not die on the cross, but separated himself from Jesus before death occurred. With this view the Incarnation was impossible, and the human nature of Jesus Christ was considered illusion.*

I. The Essence of Christianity-Christ

1 John 1:1

Boice: *Without Christ there would have been no Christianity, for Christianity began by God's revelation of Himself in Jesus and continues by the authoritative testimony of the apostles and others to that revelation. It follows that without Christ there can be no Christianity today.*

Malcolm Muggeridge: *It is Christ or nothing.*

That which was from the beginning: Christ was around, alive when the world began.

This person, Jesus Christ, whom I have an intimate relationship with is the same one who created the world and has always been around.

II. Evidences of Christianity.

... *we have heard*, the things that the apostles heard from the lips of Jesus were still ringing in John's ears.

Heibert: *What they heard had a transforming impact on them, leaving them unshakably assured as to the true identity of their teacher.*

... *seen with our eyes*, To behold with intelligence, perceive, scrutinize."

... *looked upon*, scrutinized carefully and throughly

... *hands have handled* To handle...to examine closely

... *of the Word of life*; **Wiersbe**: *Why does Jesus Christ have this name? Because Christ is to us what our words are to others. Our words reveal to others just what we think and how we feel. Christ reveals to us the mind and heart of God. He is the living means of communication between God and men. To know Jesus Christ is to know God!*

1 John 1:2 Manifested: to be revealed, to become visible, plain, clear; to be manifested is to be revealed in one's true character

And we have seen it and bear witness: We are eyewitnesses and give a clear and exact and detailed testimony of the fact.

III. Message of Christianity.

1. *Bear witness:* to testify. To bear a testimony to that which one has seen.
2. *Shew.* To proclaim, spread abroad; tell everyone.

Eternal life: that life which is stable, fixed, and vast from every point of view. It is unchangeable, eternal, vast, unendable.

And with His Son, Jesus Christ. another point made to Gnostics who denied the man Jesus was Christ, the son of God.

1:3 Declare: announce, report from a person. Idea of passing on to others that which has been authoritatively given to them.

3. **Write.** **1 John 1:4** *And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.*

Gospel has come to us

1. Apostles bore witness to what seen and heard of Jesus
2. They proclaimed it authoritatively
3. They preserved it in writings --NT.
4. Today: We take writings and testify and proclaim Christ

IV. Purpose.

1. **Fellowship.**

"with us" – horizontal; "with the Father and with His Son-Vertical.

Fellowship: common, speaks of joint ownership or active sharing of that which one has in common with others. Only comes as result of commitment to Jesus Christ

And truly our fellowship... bottom line of this horizontal communion with the brethren is our communion with Father and the Son.

2. **Joy.** **1 John 1:4** Full complete joy, gladness; supernatural attitude given by God which causes a Christian to live on the bright side of life.

ISBE: *Christian joy is no mere gaiety that knows no gloom, but is the result of the triumph of faith over adverse and trying circumstances, which, instead of hindering, actually enhance it ([Acts 5:41](#); [Rom 5:3](#) f; [Jas 1:2, 12; 5:11](#); [1 Pet 4:13](#); compare [Mt 5:11, 12](#)). Even our Lord Himself "for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising shame" ([Heb 12:2](#)).*